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Congress of the United States House of Representatives

August 4, 2021

The Honorable Frank Pallone
Chairman, Energy and Commerce
Committee
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Cathy McMorris Rogers
Ranking Member, Energy and Commerce
Committee
2322 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

CO-CHAIR, DEMOCRATIC POLICY AND
COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE

MEMBER, STEERING & POLICY

NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE

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AND CITIZENSHIP

SUBCOMMITTEE ON ANTITRUST,
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SUBCOMMITTEE ON COURTS,
INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY, AND THE INTERNET

COMMITTEE ON RULES

SUBCOMMITTEE ON LEGISLATIVE
AND BUDGET PROCESS

SUBCOMMITTEE ON RULES AND
ORGANIZATION OF THE HOUSE

HOUSE SELECT COMMITTEE
ON THE CLIMATE CRISIS

Dear Chairman Pallone and Ranking Member McMorris Rogers:

I write to request a hearing for a bipartisan bill which is currently before your committee: H.R. 477, Ally's Act.

Ally, a young girl from Broomfield, Colorado, wrote to the Congress in 2019 to alert us to issues she was facing getting her insurance company to cover her hearing device. Despite being born with microtia and atresia—born without a right ear and a missing ear canal—and therefore requiring the use of a bone anchored hearing aid (“BAHA”), her private insurance company denied coverage of this device, as insurance companies have consistently done.

A BAHA is one form of an osseointegrated device (“OID”), that can be used to treat forms of hearing loss like Ally's that cannot be helped with a traditional hearing aid. These auditory implant devices also include cochlear implants, and are medically necessary both for children and adults to restore their hearing.

Many individuals throughout the U.S. are born with hearing loss due to congenital anomalies known as aural atresia, underdeveloped or absent ear canals, and/or microtia, the absence of an ear. OIDs help different forms of hearing loss than a traditional hearing aid, and for people like Ally, they are often the only devices that can restore hearing.

OIDs are necessary to provide life-changing access to hearing to individuals who cannot be helped with traditional forms of hearing aids, yet these devices can cost thousands of dollars without consistent coverage by insurance companies.

H.R. 477 would require private insurance companies to cover OIDs and cochlear implants, their accompaniments, medical visits, and surgeries that allow them to function. The bill has over 40 endorsements, including the American Cochlear Implant Alliance, American Academy of Audiology, and American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. Ally's Act also has 27 bipartisan cosponsors, and companion legislation has been introduced in the Senate by Senator Capito and Senator Warren.

We must increase coverage of these critical hearing devices, to ensure that children like Ally and many more adults around the country are able to access and use these devices.

Thank you for your leadership, and I look forward to working with you to expand access to these critical hearing devices.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Joe Neguse". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Joe" and last name "Neguse" clearly visible.

Joe Neguse
Member of Congress